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Threescore years and ten

New York

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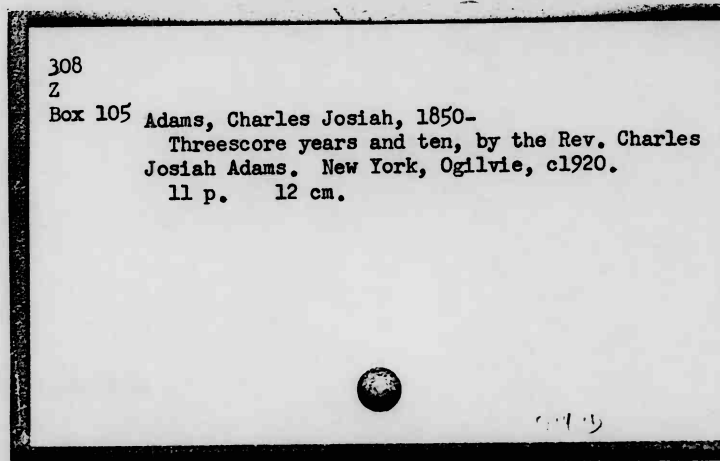
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THRESCORE YEARS
AND TEN

BY

THE REV. CHARLES JOSIAH ADAMS, D. D.

AUTHOR OF

*Where Is My Dog; or, Is Man Alone Immortal? The
Racing Parson; or, How Baldy Won the County
Seat, Robert G. Ingersoll, et. al., and the
Clerical Attire, Etc., Reprieve and
Other Poems, Hope Undeferred,
Awakenings With In Athens,
This and That and That
and This, My Ego, Etc.*

NEW YORK:

J. S. OGILVIE PUBLISHING COMPANY

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COMPLIMENTARY
ASKING CRITICISM

CE
May 9, 1923.
AS

ON MY SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

Can one avoid being self-centered on his birthday? He may personify any one of his capacities. He may think of himself as, say, a perceiver, a thinker, a guardian of himself. In the last named capacity, I thought of myself as apart from myself, in the latest of my longer songs, My Ego—though, temporally and eternally with myself. Was I justifiable in so doing? I am as aware of myself as I am of any other thing or person. And in any perception must there not be a perceiver as well as a perceived? In self-consciousness, am I not a duality—both the passive and the active? Is not this as true morally as in any other regard? May not—if I may be allowed to so use the words, for the sake of clearness—my *I* influence my *Ego*, my *Ego* my *I*—they being not one, but a pair? I need guardianship. May not my Ego be one of my guardians? Let that be as it may, on my seventieth birthday, I am trying to respond, as a little child, to the "Come unto me!"—realizing that in proportion to my success in so doing is there for me "the peace which passeth all understanding."

CHARLES JOSIAH ADAMS.

Westerleigh, Staten Island, N. Y.

Allhallowe'en, 1920.

Wm.
Edw. T. Deligman.
Regards.
Chas. J. Adams.

THE NOW APPROACHED

Impossible that I have lived so long—
Thrice twenty years and ten! And yet 'tis true.
For reverence and confidence belong
To the Familiar Bible, through and through—
The printed pages, and the written, too.
But it was only yesterday that I,
From any danger, to the mother flew,
Or that she might her loving lips apply
To any hurt; an hour ago the door
Collegiate closed behind me, and was o'er
Neglected opportunities—begun
The race, with hope, which stumblingly,
Some troubled moments, haltingly I've run,
To where is near the Now approached by me.

MY WIFE

"Amen!" I said, when 'twas remarked, if I,
In living my thrice twenty years and ten,
Had ever shown a power to apply
My faculties all-wisely, it was when
I chose, as mate, the only woman who,
With me—most trying of the sons of men—
Could possibly have come the decades through—
Adding: "I chooser? It may rather be,
"That, in His wisdom, Someone chose for me—
"Someone, Who, over regions rough and wide,
"Through ups and downs of an unsettled life,
"The fickle bridegroom led to meet the bride—
"To needed correlation of the wife."

CONTENT

I've memories, which, sensitive, arise,
 Upon suggestion slightest, me to please
 Or pain, distinct as if they met my eyes
 External. 'Mong the most distinct of these:
 I walk where one the looming structures sees,
 Within a canyon deep of masonry,
 With multitudes. My soul is not at ease,
 In brooding o'er the things affecting me
 Mundanely—glooming, as I mope along,
 That I'll be paid so little for my song!—
 Till comes, from where the tallest building stands
 A figure lean, and desolate, and bent,
 With dry and vacant eyes, and wringing hands:
 With pity filled, I'm with my lot content.

"HERE AM I!"

Though I've been very wasteful, thankfully
 I recognize, that I've not wasted all
 The three score years and ten allotted me—
 That (for example), as the shadows fall
 From out the future, is a hearty call,
 From one, to whom I found it to be kind
 A possibility, in spite of party brawl,
 And he in faction different aligned—
 That I've not fully failed in putting through
 The little something I was called to do:—
 Which argue, that, upon my humble part,
 The conscience not aye sluggish, or the heart:
 So, hoping, wait I, with my eyes about,
 And, "Here!" until the added time is out.

A BLUNDER

The rector saw that was eneroaching,
 The time for his going away,
 A natal-day nearly approaching,
 Of which he had little to say.—
 His last natal-day?—

Of vigor, at least: if he borrow
 The statement, from out of the yore,
 That they have but "labor and sorrow,"
 Who have in the body years more
 Then ten and three score.

Then suddenly came there a knocking,
 Where he with himself was confined,
 Awaking suspicion most shocking—
 Though not to pride over-inclined:
 "Unseen, out o' mind!"—

Suspicion?—"There's nothing more certain!"
 He said, when a moment he'd thought;
 As lifted the past-hiding curtain,
 A glimpse of no rector was caught:
 How quickly forgot!—

He never had heard but slight mention
 Of those of the greatest of fame;
 All others had dropped from attention:
 No mention of even a name,
 In praise or in blame!

This fathered a quick inspiration:
 A window he'd have fashioned, of grace—
 His notion; an artist's creation—
 The people assembled to face—
 Exalted its place!—

Around it the names all appearing,
 Of those who the honor deserved,
 Encircling the Shepherd a-nearing,
 Lamb-burdened—the Shepherd they'd served,
 And little had swerved!—

The names he succeeded in finding:
 In records most carelessly kept;
 In volumes of mouldering binding;
 On rusty stones o'er where they slept—
 A number except;

Which mattered but little!—Completed
 The window,—a marvel! 'twas said—
 Small letters its purpose defeated:
 The names—at so far overhead—
 They couldn't be read.

But deeper than that was his blunder,
 He felt himself willing to state:
 He being o'ercome by a wonder:
 What use is in wrestling with fate?—
 The names out o' date!—

A blunder he'd ne'er have committed—
 'Mongst more than could ever be told—
 If only he'd meekly submitted,
 To being forgotten, when old—
 His name unenrolled.

PRAISE

We followed rever'rently the pallèd bier,
 The agèd rector's form to lay away,
 Returning to his study, there to hear
 What each, in turn, would to his honor say.—
 "Minute his learning and profound!" said one;
 "His preaching strong and fine!" another said;
 Another: "All-atune his life was run!"—
 Each speaker full of praises for the dead,
 All-unsuspecting that his words were heard
 By ears not by the study-walls contained,
 Till heavy curtains at a doorway stirred,
 Aparted, and a face, adrawn and strained,
 Appeared, belonging to his wife!—She cried:
 "Oh, if you'd spoken so before he died!"

PEACE

His resignation parish-talk,
 A bit disturbed his morning walk,
 And somewhat furtive, somewhat lent—
 To the subjective more his bent
 Than the objective—though no song
 Escaped him of the feathered throng,
 No scent of bloom, no tint, no sheen
 Of light upon the leafy green;
 Nor of emotion's passing trace
 On an appearing human face,
 On street or lawn, or door-way in,
 Or set, or smiling, or a-grin—
 His inner eyes on scenes of tears,
 Of joys, throughout so many years,
 To his parishioners, and those
 He'd centered, friends and foes
 About, who help vouchsafed,
 Or by their opposition chafed—
 Till when it seemed that, at his side,
 His known successor caught his stride—
 The air apulsing, as if said:
 "The rector, hail, the rector dead!"
 As on his inner hearing fell:
 "Your work here ended, it is well!"—
 And to him of unrest surcease—
 In self-obliteration—peace.

THE SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

The chaplain rising, bowing, rushing out,
 As if a service were to be about,
 To our regret, I asked the captain: "Why
 "Do soldiers hold in estimation high
 "The Galilean, and who, in His Name,
 "The ordered right to help the war-hurt claim?"
 "The Galilean?" said he, with a thump,
 Which made the glasses on the table jump:
 "Of all the teeming millions since man's birth
 "He was the bravest that has stood on earth!
 "And those who represent Him have believed,
 "And Something, when commissioned, have received—
 "A Something more than any soldier gets
 "In chevrons multiplied or epaulets!
 "I've seen the chaplain on the firing-line,
 "His duty doing, as I've tried to mine,
 "Without a sword, or rifle, or grenade,
 "Unaided by the spirit of the squad—
 "His office not in killing, but to aid
 "The fellows, in the Author's image made!—
 "I've seen him in the muddy-bloody trench,
 "Regardless of discomforts, gases, stench—
 "I've seen him where the eyes were growing dim—
 "Where shrapnel hailed!—My hat is off to him!" . . .
 "And his to you!" . . . "A difference, I'd say!—
 "My service done, I sit in my café,
 "While he, I bet, is to the job, somewhere
 "To do, accepting what's to suffer there!—
 "A soldier of the sword I"—rising—"toss
 "A bumper to the soldier of the Cross!"—
 "Here, too!" there came from ev'ry side.—"And
 here!" . . .
 And can I e'er forget the ringing cheer?

A QUESTION

I saw a maiden, passing fair—
 Her sparkling eyes and cheeks aglow
 A-peeping through her golden hair—
 Athwart a morn in May to go;
 And, for a moment, I was straight,
 And struck, at once, a youthful gait.

I saw a mother—at her breast
 A babe a-holding, while, at play,
 In all the charm of young unrest,
 Her growing brood—one summer's day;
 And, then, I felt a strength mature,
 But for a little to endure.

I saw a warrior, panoplied—
 Through features set, his eyes ashine,
 As Colleoni's,* reined his steed!—
 On a September morning fine;
 And, thrilled, I was, once more, as when
 I numbered with the fighting-men.

A gray philosopher I saw—
 His sunken head his hands between,
 Concentred, to conclusion draw
 From mysteries—on Hallowe'en;
 And, "Barring his capacity,"
 I thought, "a picture true of me!"

In "passing-understanding peace,"
 An aged saint, with faith sublime,
 I saw, awaiting his release—
 Without, the cold of Christmas Time;
 And said: "An end to be desired! . . .
 "But have I such an end aspired?"

* Whose equestrian statue, in Venice, by Verrocchio, is conceded to be the finest in the world.

Where Is My Dog?

BY THE REV. CHARLES JOSIAH ADAMS, D.D.

12mo. vol. 200 pages. Cloth bound. Price, \$1.00 Postpaid.

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SOME OF THE MANY COMMENTS ON THIS AND THAT AND THAT AND THIS

BY THE REV. CHARLES JOSIAH ADAMS, D.D.

From Doctor Norcross: "It reminds me of a tapestry loom I saw in Granada, with its shuttle flying hither and thither. It is great, like the Granada tapestry, a delicate and refined suggestion of genius and art, with the light shining through."

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BY CHARLES JOSIAH ADAMS, D.D.

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It has been said of Doctor Adams: "He thinks in pictures." That is a good way to put it. He expresses himself in pictures.

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Each of his poems is a picture, or a succession of pictures. Take as an example the last poem of this collection:

"To Miss

Afterwards

Mrs."

Just after the sun had retired him to rest,

To his gorgeously curtained couch in the west,

I saw, from some mysterious where,

A star appear in the upper air;

And the night-winds sighed, as, in lowered tone,

They murmured sadly, "Alone—alone!"

But they joyously laughed—clapped their hands in my face—

As another star came—took by him her place;

And, together, they're reigning, and greater, by far,

In union, than either could be as a star!"

Could the question be popped more distinctly? Every one of Doctor Adams' pictures conveys something, principal or subordinate. In the latter case, it fits in, playing its part in the making of the larger picture—as in *Reprieve*, *The Matterhorn Head*, *To a Midwinter Fly*, *The Gray Charger*, the . . . But get the collection and read it! For the sake of the pictures. Not only. For Doctor Adams never gets far away from the idea for which he has sacrificed so much in the course of the decades; the idea which he has embodied in the word (which is his) *Biophilism*, the Love of Life, the largest expression of which he has given in his prose: *Where Is My Dog*; or, *Is Man Alone Immortal*?

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